

Haftarah Mi Ketz — 1 Kings 3:15 to 4:5
chantable English version by Len Fellman
based on the translations of

Aryeh Kaplan, the Stone Edition Tanach, the new JPS, W. Gunther Plaut, and The Jerusalem Bible

3:15 Then woke up Solomon, and behold, it was a dream! When he came to Jerusalem [he went to stand]
before |the ark [of the covenant of his Lord] and offered burnt offerings as well as [peace offerings],
and made a banquet for all his servants.

16 Then [there appeared] [two women] who were prostitutes before the king, [and presented themselves] before him.

17 [And first there spoke] the first [of the two women], “If it please my lord,
[both I] [and this woman] here do dwell in a house together. I gave birth while she was there [in the house].

18 [And it happened], [on the third] day after my delivery, [that *she* gave birth], this other woman.

And we [were there together]. [No one else] [was with us] [in the house]. There were just the two of us, in the house.

19 [But then died] the son of this woman here, in the night, because she had laid down [on top of him].

20 [So she got up] in the middle of the night, [and she picked up] my son [who lay there beside me]
while your maid servant was sleeping, [and laid it] on her bosom, and she laid the *dead* child [on my bosom],

21 [When I woke up] [in the morning] to nurse my son, [there he was dead].

[But looking carefully] [at the child] [in the morning], [I could see that this] was not my son, the one I gave birth to.”

22 [And then spoke] the other woman, “[It’s not true], [but rather] [my son] is alive, [and *her* son] is dead.”

And said [the first woman], “No, [the truth is] your son is dead, [and my son] is alive.”

[And thus they argued] before the king.

3:23 And said the king, “*This* one says, *It is my son who is alive*; *your* son is dead’,
[and thus claims] [the other one], ‘*No* but rather, *your* son is dead, *and mine is alive*’”.

24 And ordered the king, “Fetch me a sword.” So they brought a sword, and laid it before the king.

25 Then commanded the king, “[Now divide] the child who is alive, in two.
[Then give] [one half] to one, [and give the other half] [to the other one].”

26 Then spoke [the woman]—the one whose son was alive—[pleading with the king],
[since she burned] [with compassion] [for her son].[And she said], “[I beg you] [O my lord],
[give to her] the child that lives. [Don’t kill him],[don’t let him die].”
[And the other] [said this], “[Neither to me] [nor to you] should he go.[Instead, divide him].”

27 And responded the king [by saying this], “[Give to the first woman] the child that lives.
[Do not after all] [have him killed].[She is indeed] his mother.”

28 It was heard [throughout all of Israel] of the judgment that was rendered by the king,
[and they stood in awe] before the king.
For they had seen [that indeed wisdom]—[the wisdom of God] [was in him], to do justice.

4:1 And so did King Solomon [end melody] reign [over all of Israel].

Len Fellman's English readings with tropes

The purpose of this project is to translate *THE SONG OF THE TORAH* into English.

I work by comparing as many as ten English translations of a *pasuk* and creating a cantillated English sentence that sounds as much as possible like the Hebrew. They follow the Hebrew as closely as possible, word for word and trope by trope. The English language has an amazing flexibility, making it possible to make the English word order match that of the Hebrew quite well, allowing for some “poetic licence”, and some willingness on the part of the listener to be “carried” by the melody more than by the English syntax. The translation needs to sound good when *chanted*, but not necessarily when *spoken or read*.

Unlike most translations, these “transtropilations” are not intended to be a substitute for the Hebrew. On the contrary, they are meant to provide a “window” into the Hebrew text and its musical expression. My ideal listener knows enough Hebrew and has enough interest to follow the Hebrew in a bilingual text while the *leyner* is chanting the English version, to bring the Hebrew text to life, both *verbally* and *musically*. For this purpose I use *exactly* the same tropes in the English as in the Hebrew (almost always on the corresponding English word).

The texts can be used to do **consecutive translation**, i.e. leyning a phrase in Hebrew, followed by the corresponding phrase sung in English. Some of my recordings demonstrate this. I do this frequently when leyning for groups that either know little Hebrew, or that don't have a *chumash* in front of them.

I favor literal translations (e.g. “cut a covenant”) to call attention to Hebrew idioms, and towards simpler (even if less accurate) words (e.g. Ex. 12:7 “beam above the door” rather than “lintel”) to be easier to follow. If my readings provoke a discussion of the Hebrew, I consider that as justification for using less-than-idiomatic English. I try to find just the right balance between “literalness” and “listenable-ness”. A primary goal is throwing light on the Hebrew syntax.

In order to adapt the trope symbols to a left-to-right language like English, I *reversed* the direction of the trope symbols:

mercha tipcha munach tevir mapakh or yetiv kadma or pashta geresh gershayim telisha katana telisha gedola

(Generally speaking the *conjunctive tropes* such as mercha, munach, mapakh, kadma, and telisha katana “lean toward” the words they “conjoin” to, while the *disjunctive tropes* such as tipcha, geresh, gershayim, and telisha gedola “lean away” from the words that follow, so as to create a sense of separation.)

The trope symbol is normally placed under the accented syllable, unless it is a *pre-positive* accent (telisha gedola, placed *at the beginning* of the word or phrase) or a *post-positive* one (telisha katana or pashta, placed at the *end* of the word or phrase).

The Hebrew text frequently puts a *makkeph* (which is like a hyphen) between words in order to treat them as a single word to be chanted. I use a different system for English: If an entire English phrase is to be chanted to a single trope melody, I place it between grey brackets, as in this phrase from the Book of Lamentations:

[clings to her skirts◆]

The *leyner* is invited to fit this phrase to the *Eicha* “*rivi’ i*” melody in whatever way seems most natural.

As a variant of the “grey bracket” device, I indicate pairs of tropes by “wrapping them around” the phrase which have the combined melody:

mercha/tipcha	kadma/geresh (or: azla, etc.)	mercha siluk
Renew our days	‘She weeps bitterly’.	a fire-offering to God

Again, the *leyner* should decide on the most natural way to fit the phrase to the combined trope melody.

I put words in gray which I consider essential but which don’t strictly match the Hebrew. I also “pad” some phrases with extra words in gray to fill out a musical phrase nicely. Different trope systems vary widely in the length of the musical phrase used, so the words in gray may or not be used depending on the leyner’s cantillation system. In particular, the tropes *telisha g’dola* (Q), *legarmeh*, *metigah-zakef*, and *pazer* vary widely in the musical phrases used for chanting. (And please indulge me in my whimsical treatments of *shalshelet*.)

“Metigah-zakef” is a special trope combination which can be recognized by a kadma and a zakef katon appearing on the same Hebrew word (again, a *makkeph* makes two words into one). (There are several examples in Genesis 18 & 19, beginning with 18:16). I indicate this by placing the corresponding English phrase in grey brackets:

[Take heed—take care for yourself] :

In some trope systems (viz. cantor Moshe Haschel in “Navigating the Bible II”) this is given a distinctive melody—I add extra syllables to fill out the musical phrase (as in “take care” in this example). Haschel’s system also chants the trope *munach* as *legarmeh* more often than other systems do.

I don’t write a single word of translation without first hearing the melody of the phrase in my mind, following one of two trope systems: The one by Portnoy and Wolff (*The Art of Cantillation*) or the one by Joshua R. Jacobson (*Chanting the Hebrew Bible*).

I transcribe the name יְהוָה as YHWH (in small caps). I almost always chant this as *yud-hey-vav-hey*, which I have discovered fits marvelously into several of the trope melodies. But of course the leyner can choose to pronounce it as “God” or “Adonai”.

Warning on the Hebrew text: The text I use for the English trope system is from Aryeh Kaplan; the Hebrew text I display is from Wikisource. Occasionally (but rarely) a phrase will use different tropes in the two systems.

The English translations I mostly use (besides several scholarly commentaries) are the following:

- Aryeh Kaplan, ‘The Living Torah’ (1981) (also my source for proper names & transliterations)
- Richard Elliott Friedman, ‘The Bible With Sources Revealed’ (2003)
- Everett Fox, ‘The Five Books of Moses’ (1997)
- The Stone Edition ‘Tanach’ (1996)
- JPS ‘Hebrew-English Tanach’, (2nd Ed. 2000), along with Orlinsky, ‘Notes on the New Translation of the Torah’ (1969)
- Robert Alter, ‘The Five Books of Moses’ (2004)
- Commentaries in the ‘Anchor Bible’ series
- Rotherham, The Emphasized Bible (1902)
- The Jerusalem Bible (1966) (also my source for topic headings)
- The New King James Bible (1982)